

# Salvation Army Heresy Concerning Salvation

by David J. Stewart | December 2005 | Updated July 2015

There is no question that General William Booth did much good by founding the Salvation Army. However, I have a serious problem doctrinally with the official position of the Salvation Army on salvation. They teach...



**"We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ."**

**SOURCE: [1878 Foundation Deed Of The Salvation Army](#)**

The *Salvation Army* follows the heresy of their founders, William and Catherine Booth, who considered salvation a “state” that could be lost if one failed to continue in obedient faith. May I say, salvation is NOT a “state,” it is a new birth. It is a second birth, a spiritual birth. The teaching that salvation is a “state” that is conditional upon “continued obedient faith” is demonic works-salvation. The believer’s salvation is secure in Christ’s finished work of redemption. The blood has been applied to the heavenly mercy seat (Hebrews 9:12,24). The price has been paid. [The PRICE is Jesus' blood, and the PLACE is the heavenly Mercy Seat.](#)

I DO believe that many members of the *Salvation Army* are saved, if not most. I know a large local independent Baptist church of about 1,500 members that make light of the doctrine of salvation, that is, they don’t want to get into a debate over repentance. They don’t differentiate between the [Lordship Salvation heresy](#) which requires a person to make full surrender, make an effort to stop sinning, count the cost, forsake the world and submit to Christ’s absolute Lordship to be saved; versus the simple Biblical gospel which only requires that a man recognize his guilt of sin and inability to save himself, and he completely RESTS in Jesus Christ Who died on the cross for his sins, was buried and resurrected from the dead after three days.

The former of the two plans of salvation presented does NOT produce the new birth in Christ, but the latter DOES. And so I have noticed that some of the church members in the Baptist church I just mentioned are saved, and others are not, because literally two different plans of salvation are believed in the church. One is good news (the gospel) and the other is bad news (a false plan of salvation). Likewise, I believe the *Salvation Army* is confused, as are many churches and organizations today concerning the gospel. I ask you to prayerfully consider what the Bible says, and not take my word for it or anybody else’s. William and Catherine Booth were imperfect humans, as are all preachers and all people.

My own Grandmother and Grandfather, and parents, were involved with the *Salvation Army*’s String Band and my Grandfather and Grandmother were honored officers in the *Salvation Army* for most of their life. I was dedicated to the Lord by my parents at age one at the *Salvation Army*. My grandfather in Sweden (whom I never had the privilege of meeting) was a famous orchestra conductor. And I love them all (they’re all in Heaven now). I used to go with my parents to the Serviceman’s Center in Chicago. Men whose

lives had been completely ruined by sin came to the Serviceman's Center for rehabilitation and spiritual guidance to help get them back on their feet.

My parents would show some old reel-to-reel films of Charlie Chaplin, W.C. Fields, Laurel & Hardy and The Three Stooges. I cooked the popcorn as a small youngster. We had a great time doing that for years at the Salvation Army. Then my father would preach the gospel and give an invitation. So I don't take it lightly to criticize the Salvation Army. I'd prefer not to. I don't like speaking the truth when it causes people to dislike me. It hurts my soul; yet, I choose to please my Lord Jesus by taking a doctrinal stand, on pain of making enemies. When I first read the official statement of faith of the Salvation Army, I cringed, because our salvation is NOT dependent upon the way we live. Salvation is a new birth that is instant, irreversible and permanent.

Here again is the Salvation Army's official dogma, which is unbiblical . . .

**"We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ."**

**SOURCE: [1878 Foundation Deed Of The Salvation Army](#)**

My friend, that is religion! You can lose religion, but you cannot lose your life in Christ, for being born-again is as irreversible as the physical birth. Can a man return into his mother's womb? Likewise, can a man lose God's salvation that has absolutely nothing to do with the life he lives? We are not saved by good works, and we are not lost by bad works. The whole purpose of the law of Moses is to be used as a measuring stick, to show us our sinfulness and total inability to save ourselves (Romans 3:19-20). The law then BRINGS US TO CHRIST, Who can save us (Galatians 3:24-26). God's righteousness is imputed (credited) to our account by faith (Romans 4:5-6). This is why we read in *Philippians 3:9*, "*And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*"

If saved, always saved! The new birth cannot be undone, no matter what we say, think or do. If a man blasphemes the name of Christ and claims that he is no longer a Christian, it just reveals that he was never born-again to begin with. An unsaved man may adopt the philosophy of Christianity, or establish membership in a religious institution that calls itself "Christian," or he may serve diligently in a Bible-believing church as a faithful member, and yet NEVER HAVE BEEN BORN-AGAIN AT ALL. Please read the following excellent words of warning from one of my favorite authors, Michael Patrick Bowen . . .

**You can live for Christ, you can love Christ, you can serve Him with all your might, time, talent and wealth. You can pray to Him, read your Bible, get water-baptized, join a church, witness to people, and do every wonderful work contained within the realm of Christianity, but if you fail to trust Jesus Christ alone for your salvation, He will "dump" you.**

**SOURCE: [I NEVER KNEW YOU](#) (.pdf), by Michael P. Bowen; by Barbour Books, © 2009; page 77.**

*Lordship Salvation* attempts to force people to live a righteous life by ADDING repentance from sin as a prerequisite to being saved. In sharp contrast, Romans 4:5 simply states... “*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.*” To be saved, you must acknowledge your guilt of sin before God the Father, and consequently realize that you are totally incapable of saving yourself, and then completely REST in His only begotten Son, Jesus, the Christ Who died on the cross for your sins, was buried and resurrected from the dead three days later (1st Corinthians 15:1-4). It's that simple.

I KNOW I am saved because eternal life is rooted in the PROMISES of God (Titus 1:2); and not upon how good I'm doing in life as a believer. My salvation is secure in Jesus Christ and has nothing to do with my efforts. Eternal life is a gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). A gift has no strings attached. Our part is simply to trust upon the name of Jesus. God does the saving (John 1:12-13).

The implication is that salvation can be lost by not continuing in faith. I believe this teaching was more out of ignorance of the Bible than anything else. I believe that William Booth was a true believer and that those in the salvation Army are saved; but they do adhere to the heresy that salvation can be lost. Salvation is a free gift from God, which cannot be lost. Those who claim to no longer be Christians were never saved in the first place. **1st John 2:19, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."** If saved, always saved.

The Salvation Army is vague on exactly what they believe. One thing is for certain, salvation is not a state that a person can move away from, it is a spiritual new birth by the Holy Spirit of God that is irreversible. The Salvation Army is teaching the heresy of Calvinism.

Pastor John MacArthur is the most dangerous kind of false prophet, because he is 97% accurate. Unfortunately, he's wrong on salvation, very wrong. MacArthur is a devout 5-point Calvinist as is Evangelist Paul Washer. MacArthur deceitfully talks about grace, mercy, being born-again, and uses all the right terms; yet he woefully corrupts and misunderstands the Biblical plan of salvation, which is clearly seen in the following quote from MacArthur...

***“Don’t believe anyone who says it’s easy to become a Christian. Salvation for sinners cost God His own Son; it cost God’s Son His life, and it’ll cost you the same thing...”***

**SOURCE: Hard to Believe, page 93.**

My friend, it is easy, not hard, to be saved. It is so easy to be saved that 3,000 people were saved in one day in Acts 2:41. Lordship Salvation is a lie of the Devil, NOT based upon the Word of God. The Bible clearly teaches that salvation is a FREE GIFT of God (Romans 5:15, 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9). A gift cannot have any strings attached if it is a genuine gift. To teach that a believer has to continue in “obedient faith in Christ” is incorrect doctrine. Salvation occurs in a split second, the very moment you believe upon Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Once you're saved, you can NEVER lose your salvation. If someone professes that they are no longer a Christian, then it is only because they

weren't a Christian to begin with. The spiritual birth is as irreversible as the physical birth.

Ironically, Pastor Harry Ironside (1876-1951) was a captain in the *Salvation Army* and he strongly taught the [Eternal Security of the Believer](#). I am a big fan of [Pastor Ironside](#) and he was doctrinally correct in my opinion. It is sad that the *Salvation Army's* doctrinal statement doesn't reflect this important doctrine of the Christian faith. It is not a mere matter of semantics, I wish it were. A correctly understood Gospel—Christ's death on the cross for our sins, His burial and bodily resurrection three days later—mandates eternal security. On the other hand, if one is trusting in dead works, or a “commitment” to perform works, or to live a certain way to be saved, then salvation cannot be assured. Any plan of salvation that requires human effort is a counterfeit. Anyone who turned away from sinful activities as a requirement to be saved, didn't get saved. We are saved solely by [God's imputed righteousness](#).

Here are the words of Dr. Harry Ironside, who had it exactly right . . .

**"WHEN THE LEGALIST comes insisting that salvation is by obedience to God's holy law (which in itself is just and good), he is preaching another gospel, for the Word of God declares, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight."**

**SOURCE:** Dr. Harry Ironside, from the Gospel tract, [Another Gospel?](#)

In total contrast, the *Salvation Army* teaches a form of religious legalism, and I quote...

**"We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ."**

**SOURCE:** [Official doctrinal statement of the Salvation Army](#)

Continued obedient faith? Not just faith, but obedient faith? Those are some dangerous terms.

The TRUTH from God's Word is that you DON'T have to continue doing anything to remain saved. We are saved by RESTING in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 4:10-11), not by continuing in obedience. Once you've been born again, you've been born again!!! Once you get saved, your position in God's family is forever settled in heaven. You are God's child and He is your Heavenly Father. Though our fellowship with God may be broken due to sin, our position in Christ never changes. Salvation is not of mankind, but is of God. Salvation is receiving, not giving. Our only part in salvation is only to believe upon the Lord Jesus Christ (John 6:40; Acts 16:31). God does all the rest. God will not save anyone who is trying to be saved, He will only save those who are trusting to be saved. Salvation is not doing your best, it is having Christ's best put to your account through receiving Him by faith. Salvation is a take proposition, not a give proposition. Eternal life is received, not achieved.

Please don't be deceived by the Devil's lie my friend, you don't have to give up anything to be saved. There's a lot of heretics running around ADDING [repentance from works](#) to simple faith in Christ. We call 'em the “Lordship Salvation” crowd. Now please don't misunderstand me, being saved doesn't give us God's permission to sin, but God's simple plan of salvation does NOT require us to do anything more than believe upon Christ to

forgive our sins. Salvation is simple (2nd Corinthians 11:3). The whole idea of a “gift” is that it is completely free. Romans 5:18, “Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Salvation is a FREE GIFT!

Anyone who comes as a guilty sinner, condemned under God's Holy Law, and trusts upon the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive their sins will be saved. Acts 10:43, “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.” Whether they “continue in obedient faith” or not is irrelevant to their salvation. The Bible is filled with examples of carnal believers who continued in sinful living, such as the sexually immoral man in 1st Corinthians 5:1-5... Paul told the church at Corinth to address the issue... “**To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**” (verse 5). Salvation is without works (Romans 4:5). Eternal life is a gift (Romans 6:23), freely given (Romans 5:15), and freely received (Revelation 22:17).

### **Salvation Army In Bed With Rome**

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